

News Release



**Allied Maritime
Command Headquarters
Northwood**



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NATO Flagship ESBERN SNARE Disrupts Pirate Attacks in Gulf of Aden.

LONDON: Today NATO flagship HDMS ESBERN SNARE, in cooperation with international counter-piracy forces successfully disrupted multiple piracy attacks on Panamanian flagged MV Caribbean Carrier and Norwegian flagged Hoegh Oslo who were transiting in the Gulf of Aden. MV Caribbean Carrier was transiting in the International Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) in the Gulf of Aden when she reported being under attack from pirates firing at her. US warship Winston Churchill working for combined coalition forces and Danish Warship ESBERN SNARE, the flagship of NATO's counter-piracy mission, responded to the call for help. After the pirates broke off the attack a Spanish Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) working for EU Naval Forces located and tracked the pirate skiff and observed the pirates now trying to attack another ship, MV Hoegh Oslo. After ESBERN SNARE's helicopter arriving on scene, the pirate skiff broke off the attack and tried to escape towards Somalia.

The evading pirate skiff refused to stop so the Danish Navy helicopter fired warning shots which compelled the pirates to surrender. When the boarding team from ESBERN SNARE subsequently investigated the skiff, they found spent and unused ammunition, knives and other piracy related paraphernalia onboard.

"The nature of the counter-piracy mission down here is challenging. We stay poised and sharp, because in an instant, we have to be ready to react to a call for help", Captain Carsten Fjord-Larsen, Commanding Officer of HDMS ESBERN SNARE said. "NATO warships are ready, day and night to employ the full extent of our assets to ensure the safety of the merchant ships".

"Today's events were another fine example of the good coordination that exists between the different forces operating to curb the threat from piracy" Commodore Christian Rune Royal Danish Navy, commander of NATO counter piracy operation said after today's action.

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HDMS ESBERN SNARE is operating as the flagship of Task Force 508, part of NATO's counter-piracy Operation OCEAN SHIELD in the Horn of Africa region. ESBERN SNARE has been deployed off the Horn of Africa since 5 August and will conduct NATO counter-piracy operations until early December 2010.

End text.



Picture provided by Spanish Maritime Patrol Aircraft (EUNAVFOR).



Picture provided by HDMS ESBERN SNARE.

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Background Information:

NATO has contributed to the international counter piracy effort off the Horn of Africa since December 2008. The mission has expanded from escorting UN and World Food Programme Shipping under Operation Allied Provider and protecting merchant traffic in the Gulf of Aden under Operation Allied Protector. In addition to these activities and as part of the latest mission, Operation Ocean Shield, NATO is working with other international bodies to help develop capacity of countries in the region to tackle piracy on their own.

Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 is permanently assigned to NATO. It is a multi-national Naval Group that provides the NATO Alliance with the ability to quickly respond to crisis situations anywhere in the world. A capable, stand-alone task group and one of four standing maritime elements that form a flexible core around which NATO can build a larger force to meet a wide range of missions that will include non-combatant evacuations, consequence management, counter terrorism, crisis response, embargo operations, etc.

NATO has recently announced its continuing commitment to counter-piracy by extending Operation Ocean Shield to December 2012.

NATO Task Forces currently in Operation Ocean Shield:

HDMS ESBERN SNARE (Flagship) - Denmark
HMS MONTROSE – United Kingdom
USS KAUFFMAN – United States of America

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